

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

(1) Kindly rewrite Claim 25 as follows:

25. (Amended) An interconnect structure, comprising:

a nucleation layer including a first metal located over a barrier layer within an opening in a dielectric layer, wherein the nucleation layer includes substantially uniform grains;

an intermediate layer including a second metal located over the nucleation layer; and

a bulk plug layer including the first metal located over the intermediate layer.

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

The Applicants have carefully considered this application in connection with the Examiner's Action and respectfully request reconsideration of this application in view of the following remarks.

The Applicants originally submitted Claims 1-33 in the application. In a previous response to an election of claims the Applicants elected with traverse the invention of Group II, consisting of Claims 25-33. Presently, the Applicants have amended Claim 25 and have neither canceled nor added any claims. Accordingly, Claims 25-33 are currently pending in the application.

**I. Rejection of Claims 25, 28, 32 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. §102**

The Examiner has rejected Claims 25, 28, 32 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,844,318 to Sandhu, *et al.* (Sandhu). Currently, independent Claim 25 includes the element that a nucleation layer be located over a barrier layer and within an opening